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ABSTRACT

Measures taken to cut costs at the expense of the faculty and the loss in academic quality are shown to be part of a well-organized plan being adopted throughout higher education. Problems have arisen from the activities of the private or semi-private corporate consulting organization in higher education. Taken as a whole, the uncritical use of business principles has led to sets of recommendations and proposals that threaten the future of higher education. Often these firms provide public relations assistance to force the acceptance of predetermined changes in policies. The total absence of considering the concept of quality or the purposes of higher education is the worst aspect of this management trend. References are made to the recommendations of specific consulting firms. The issues involved in the serious shortage of jobs and proposals for tenure quotas are considered. Although such factors as the shortage of public funds have affected higher education, much of the present state of affairs is due to lack of fiscal responsibility on the part of management. Faculty members need to change their position of powerlessness when acting individually through collective bargaining and unionization. (SW)

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Corporate Management Invades Academe

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Corporate Management Invades Academe

In More & More Colleges, Professors Join the Unions
U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, Sept. 10, 1973

American college faculty members are alarmed and appalled at the rapid deterioration in the state of their profession and its institutions. The economic convulsion in higher education has produced a painful and often tragic reordering of priorities in educational institutions throughout our nation. To a large extent, these readjustments have been made at the expense of the faculty — resulting in loss of jobs, inadequate salaries, unrealistically large classes, overly heavy teaching schedules, slower promotion, loss of mobility, and the concomitant erosion of the quality of higher education in America over the past several years.

It is only natural that individual faculty members view these crises from a very subjective and limited perspective. This is largely because of the disorganized and random way in which faculties are kept informed about the state of their profession. In most cases, the cutbacks and "reforms" made at a particular college appear to be due to local contingencies and do not seem to be part of a national administrative trend. It is the purpose of this article to show that in fact the measures taken to cut costs at the expense of the faculty and the loss in quality of their educational efforts are part of a well-organized plan being adopted throughout higher education.

It can be shown that the current crisis has given birth to what is nothing less than a new business enterprise — that of the private or semi-private corporate consulting organization in higher education. For the most part, despite their impressive names, high sounding objectives and the pedigrees of their personnel, these consulting groups have shown little vision or competence in the planning of higher educational objectives. Their suggestions are generally superficial, often misguided, and not entirely devoid of an undercurrent of vindictiveness towards college faculties. The growing suspicion that faculties are being made scapegoats in the present crisis, in order to obscure past mismanagement, is to a great extent war-

ranted. Immediate steps must be taken by faculties to protect themselves and preserve the integrity of their colleges and universities.

Simplistic Formulae

One of the first hints that faculties have received of the new direction in which college and university administrations are moving has been the introduction of the jargon of the business world into the halls of academe. Words and phrases such as faculty workload, job security, employee, productivity, and efficiency are now commonplace and have replaced more traditional academic language. But, even more important, accompanying this new nomenclature have been fundamental changes in the areas of planning and evaluation of programs and the setting of institutional priorities and goals. Perhaps most ominous has been the chilling effect these changes have had on the spirit of collegiality and the traditional forms of governance by "shared authority." In short, faculty members no longer feel like partners with their administrators in the educational enterprise, but rather are treated as subordinates whose continued employment must be periodically justified. Instead of building a rapport with their faculties in these critical times, administrators have isolated themselves by adopting the stance of corporate executives. Put quite simply, faculties, and the institutions in which they practice their professions, are no longer being led or administered. They are being *managed.* How has this come about?

As the size and complexity of the institutions increased, and the financial squeeze tightened, administrators turned in desperation to the services of educational "commissions" and management consulting firms. While some of the personnel of these groups may have a degree of expertise in the world of business and finance, and others may be familiar with the administrative processes of higher education, their resulting recommendations and the blanket application of their simplistic formulae to our institutions has been a disaster. The callous, and frequently uncritical, use of what may appear to be sound principles of business has led to sets of recommendations and proposals which threaten the future of higher education. Taken separately, some of these proposals are perhaps debatable and may in some instances even have some merit. However, taken as a whole, they constitute a clear and present danger to the future of the profession and overall quality of higher education in this country.

Quality Control

Often these firms are called upon merely to serve as public relations devices to force the acceptance of predetermined changes in policies. Their

appearance on the scene usually results in the issuance of their "report." For example, one such firm, the Academy for Educational Development, Inc. (AED) (see appendix) took the incredibly thoughtless statements of two former college presidents concerning class size and used them as the basic assumptions for a report which led to recommendations ranging from "the abolition of courses in foreign languages" to the "reduction of the number of credits required for graduation." The fact that one of these retired college administrators feels that the "concept of class size is archaic" and the other feels that "the small class lecture . . . [only] . . . enables a faculty member to deliver a mediocre talk in an intimate environment" simply to not suffice to form a sound basis for a forty-four page report entitled "Higher Education With Fewer Teachers."[1] Yet, institutions such as the Universities of California and Michigan and Bowdoin and Vassar Colleges are among the hundreds of colleges and universities which have paid enormous sums of money to obtain such consulting "services" and reports. The State of Indiana recently (1973) contracted the AED to do a "study" of higher education. The report, issued under the AED alias of The Indiana Commission on Higher Education, cost the taxpayers of Indiana $225,000.

By far, the worst aspect of all this "management overkill"[2] is not the drive for increased "productivity" and "efficiency" within academe (there certainly are some economies to be made), but rather the total absence of the concept of quality or any discussion of the purposes of higher education. The unbelievably shallow level of the discussion these groups engage in is exemplified perhaps best by the opening paragraph of the CED report, "The Management and Financing of Colleges'[5] which we quote in full:

> *The era of campus violence seems to have passed. Students are no longer locking up administrators, burning buildings, or engaging in strikes. But the crisis in higher education is not over. Many colleges and universities are in financial trouble. Many students are still dissatisfied with some aspects of higher education. Professional pride is not keeping faculty members from joining unions.*

It is not by accident that the architects of the new managerial technology in higher education, while adopting the techniques and terminology of industry, have omitted all references to that most basic concept of industrial management, "quality control." How can any serious educator propose the replacement of fulltime faculty with parttime faculty, the use of "closed circuit educational television for courses enrolling as many as 2,000-3,000 students?"[1] and the "increasing of faculty teaching loads and contact hours" as a solution to the financial woes, without any consideration whatever as to the effects of these measures on the "quality of the intellectual endeavor"?[2]

Screaming and Kicking

The means by which AED's recommendations are to be achieved is made perfectly clear. They urge the increase of student/faculty ratios by "not filling vacant faculty positions," and "increasing salaries only when faculty agree to teach large classes."[1] The use of the budget as a whip is perhaps best expressed by one of the Carnegie Commission authors who flatly states that "higher education should be dragged screaming and kicking by the budget."[4]

While the recommendations of the various "educational planning" groups are often obscure in their intent with respect to academic planning and reform, this is not the case in the area of faculty compensation. Robert H. Hayes & Associates, Inc., management consultants to educational institutions, reports to its clients that "colleges need not pay competitive salary rates," arguing: "First, employees are not that motivated by money. Second, they do not expect it. And, third, on a cost/effectiveness basis, colleges will get very little for their money by increasing salaries to reflect competitive salary conditions." The CED in the report mentioned above, points out, "In higher education the principle source of possible savings lies in instruction." CED maintains that "steep cutbacks in cost can be made mainly through holding down faculty salaries."[8]

The recommendations of Hayes Associates, with respect to budget reductions are among the most candid: "Since salary cost is the major controllable expense at every university, an aggressive manpower planning program is required . . . Fortunately, significant staff reduction is possible at most schools without touching the basic excellence of the institutions . . . Staff reduction considerations should become a part of the normal university budget review procedure."[13]

The Job Drought

It is certainly no surprise that these economic constraints have led to a serious shortage of jobs and the complete destruction of any semblance of job security for vast numbers of untenured faculty. Yet, to further exacerbate the present situation, we now have proposals to establish tenure quotas.[5,7] That such quotas would undermine the established traditions of peer evaluation and promotion for merit has not even been considered. Rather, there is an attempt to give the impression that tenure is an unnecessary and outmoded practice aimed at protecting entrenched faculty. Writing in the CED report, Ellery Sedgwick, Jr., chairman of the Medusa Corporation, opines, "Faculty tenure at one time was generally regarded as necessary for guaranteeing academic freedom. Under present circumstances, this safeguard is no longer required and it tends to serve only as a symbol of rank and to shield incompetence or indolence." Mr. Sedgwick's

attitude in itself constitutes as good a reason as any to retain, strengthen and extend the institution of tenure.

The recommendations for tenure quotas by the "educational" consultants are being adopted at many institutions. Chancellor Kibbee's recent proposal (1973) to establish such quotas at the City University of New York is perhaps the most overt threat to tenure at a major university. The twisted rationale of some current administrators for adopting quota systems is best illustrated by President E.A. Trabant of the University of Delaware, who writes, "For reasons of cost, flexibility, and fairness to young faculty, it becomes more important to adhere to the principle that, overall, no more than 50 percent of the faculty can be in the upper two (tenure) ranks."[19] Tenure quota systems can only serve to deepen the present academic job drought and cannot possibly be fair to younger faculty.

The attack on tenure is gaining momentum nationwide and is easily documented. In Virginia, tenure was abolished in 1972 for the entire community college system.[10] At Bloomfield College, New Jersey, tenure was dropped in 1972 and 13 of 70 tenured faculty were dismissed. In the State University System in Wisconsin, 88 tenured faculty were fired in 1973,[8] and at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, 28 tenured faculty have been terminated in 1974.[20]

Unfortunately, perhaps because of a lack of understanding of the magnitude of the attack on tenure, some faculty organizations have become unwitting partners with the management consultants in the drive against tenure. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) is one such organization. It participated in the Keast Commission Report, *Faculty Tenure*, which recommended tenure quotas. In more recent statements, the AAUP has argued that "desired tenure ratios" can be obtained by tightening up "academic standards" so as to "reduce the probabilities of obtaining tenure."[11,13]

The "New Depression"

Why, indeed, have our educational institutions proved to be so vulnerable in the current economic crunch? The Carnegie Commission tells us that higher education is in the midst of a "new depression"[9] and other consulting organizations place the blame on factors external to higher education, such as a shortage of public funds. This is partially true, and perhaps what administrators prefer to hear. However, upon closer scrutiny we find that much of the onus for the present state of affairs rests squarely on the administrators themselves. A more honest appraisal would show that the managers of our institutions have been permitted to solve their financial problems in the past by following the paths of financial expediency and opportunism rather than that of fiscal responsibility.

Look at the record over the past fifteen years. With the advent of federally funded research programs resulting from the Sputnik scare, our administrators have grabbed at any source of income and sponsored nearly any project in a sequence of frantic and ill-conceived moves to balance their budgets and to expand their empires. As science-establishment money began to dry up and the federal funds shifted to other areas, so did the "academic" interests of our administrators — sound academic and institutional planning (if that ever existed) has been replaced by financial hucksterism. Today, our institutions are responding in characteristic manner: rather than launching a carefully planned massive lobbying effort to increase the flow of funds into higher education, they are again taking the easy way out. We see massive cuts in plant maintenance (a bill that will have to be paid eventually), and wholesale cuts in academic programs.

Just as in the past, when money was available and expansion was rampant and no thought was given to the ultimate purposes of higher education, the same phenomenon working in reverse is now evident. Programs and personnel are being jettisoned with no other rationale than fiscal expediency. Lip service is, of course, given to the noble ideals of upgrading the faculty and fiscal responsibility. However, the hypocrisy underlying these arguments is transparent.

While our administrators are eagerly selling faculty out to save their own necks, and their loyal consultants are busily providing them with half-baked excuses, no one seems to have considered finding new sources for funds. Obviously, this is the more difficult route to follow. Instead, the higher education associations, headquartered in Washington, D.C., have urged their member institutions to develop contingency plans for reductions in force.

Perhaps the most preposterous solution to the financial ills of higher education has been put forth by the CED, which has called for a doubling of tuitions in all public institutions. Again, in all of this frantic scrambling for stopgap financial measures, there is not the slightest consideration of their effects on the quality of education. And the principle reason for this absence is the almost total lack of any meaningful faculty input into matters of budget priorities. Professor Steven Cahn has stated it very well, "A wise man is one who is a good judge of value. He can distinguish worth from cost." The past decade has seen a paucity of wise administrators in higher education.[14]

Is It Any Wonder?

Faculty have an obligation to defend themselves, their institutions, and the ideals of higher education from the depredations of the new class of educational managers. In their current disorganized state, faculties have

been the easy target for every hare-brained fiscal maneuver. Fortunately, this situation does have a remedy. Whenever people have found that they are essentially powerless when acting individually, they have turned to collective action. In the present context, this means unionization for the purposes of collective bargaining.

It is often argued that the faculty can maintain control of the academic program and their professional lives through the traditional faculty senate. The fallacy in this lies in the fact that few faculty governing structures have any meaningful role in matters of budgeting. Examples of programmatic changes and cuts made by administrative fiat abound. The recent proposal to eliminate freshman English (and the resultant elimination of many of the department's faculty members) by the President of Montgomery College in Maryland[3] is not atypical.

What can collective bargaining do to improve the financial posture of our institutions? First of all, by adjoining the professoriate to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) it will have the lobbying force of the AFL-CIO to lend support to its efforts. That this support is real and effective is a well-established political reality.

Second, the very process of being forced to sit down across the bargaining table with elected faculty representatives will, in itself, force institutional management into more careful, detailed, and long-range planning. The fact that the collective bargaining agreement, signed by both faculty and administration, is a legal contract guarantees the fulfillment of the contractual provisions.

In addition to providing for meaningful faculty participation in matters of budgeting and planning, AFT-negotiated contracts contain a wide variety of clauses guaranteeing that same participation in the governance of their institutions. The collective bargaining agreement at City University of New York[17] provides for limits on class size, teaching loads and student/faculty ratios, along with guarantees of sabbatical leaves and faculty research grants. The salary schedule and fringe benefit package at CUNY are the highest in the country. That genuine faculty control over institutional policy can be achieved through collective bargaining is well-illustrated by the following paragraph from the 1974-76 Agreement between the Seattle Community College Federation of Teachers and the Seattle Community College Board of Trustees:

> *The Board agrees that it or its representatives will meet and negotiate with the SCCFT using the prescribed negotiations procedures* ***prior to the adoption of any new policy or before changing any existing policy.*** *(Emphasis added.)*

Finally, faculties must be alerted to the existence of a new wave of anti-intellectualism sweeping America. The management groups mentioned above are riding the crest of this wave in an allout effort to gain public

support of their schemes. The attitude of Alexander M. Mood is now becoming dangerously fashionable and should serve as a clear warning to college faculties. Mr. Mood, director of the Public Policy Research Organization of the University of California-Irvine, writing for the Carnegie Commission[4] states: "Most faculty members are ordinary people who decided to become college professors. Often they are dull people who can rarely talk about anyting outside of" their field of specialization. Moreover, "they are hazy about professional sports, they haven't the time to read the best sellers — trash anyway), and they are too busy for concerts and drama. They can discourse at length about their specialty, and that's about all."

Is it any wonder that "in more and more colleges, professors join the unions"?

APPENDIX

This Appendix is intended to serve as a guide to several of the consulting firms, advisory groups and commissions which have been mentioned in this article. Up-to-date and complete information concerning the clientele of the private counseling firms is difficult to obtain. If the reader has knowledge of any such firm operating in a state or an institution not listed below, please write the Colleges and Universities Department of the American Federation of Teachers.

Part I: Consulting Firms

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